

and accordingly required election of a single species. More particularly, the Office stated that the application contains claims directed to four species: those illustrated in Figs. 1A-1C (corresponding to claims 1-13 and 27-40); Figs. 4A-4C (corresponding to claims 14-17); Fig. 7 (corresponding to claims 18-24); and Figs. 9-12 (corresponding to claims 25 and 26).

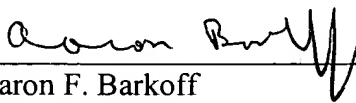
In response to the restriction requirement, the applicant elects, with traverse, the species illustrated in Figs. 1A-1C (corresponding to claims 1-13 and 27-40). This election is made without prejudice to filing future continuation applications with the unelected claims.

According to PCT Rule 13.1, the application "shall relate to one invention only or to a group of invention so linked as to form a single general inventive concept." Furthermore, PCT Rule 13.2 requires there to be "a technical relationship among those inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features."

The applicant respectfully submits that Rules 13.1 and 13.2 are satisfied because the claimed inventions share a technical relationship in that they are all part of the same vascular prosthesis system (see the Abstract). Moreover, the applicant respectfully points out that the International Preliminary Examination Report does not contain a finding of lack of unity of invention. Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests that the restriction requirement against the claims be withdrawn and all of the claims be examined in their entirety.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 10, 2003



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